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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000028

SIPDIS

FOR OIG/ISP, EUR/NCE, and EUR/EX

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ASIG](#) [EZ](#) [AMGT](#)

SUBJECT: POST RESPONSE TO OIG RECOMMENDATIONS

REF: SEPTEMBER 2004 REPORT OF INSPECTION NO. ISP-I-04-39A

1. Prague submits the following responses to the formal recommendations of the referenced OIG report.

2. Recommendation No. 1: Embassy Prague should request, and the Bureau of Consular Affairs and Bureau of European And Eurasian Affairs should approve and fund, an additional Foreign Service national position in the Consular Section to perform Consular management support duties. (Action: Embassy Prague, in coordination with CA and EUR)

Embassy's response: Embassy concurs with the OIG recommendation and has taken action. The FMO section has included the cost of an FSN-06 management support position in its budget forecast and will include the request in this year's MPP submission. Embassy now awaits funding from Department to take further action on this recommendation.

3. Recommendation No. 2: Embassy Prague should reissue a visa referral policy under Chief of Mission signature, consistent with the most recent guidance, and ensure that it is implemented consistently. (Action: Embassy Prague)

Embassy's response: Embassy reissued visa referral policy in Management Notice number 31/04 on 7/19/04.

4. Recommendation No. 3: Embassy Prague should institutionalize the required record keeping and audit procedures described in the Consular Management Handbook to compare machine-readable visa fee collections against applications received. (Action: Embassy Prague)

Embassy's response: The Consular Section is now reconciling MRV collections with applications received, as required by the Consular Management Handbook.

5. Recommendation No. 4: Embassy Prague, in coordination with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, should formally study the feasibility of reconfiguring existing areas within the chancery to meet Consular space needs. (Action: Embassy Prague, in coordination with OBO)

Embassy's response: The Embassy has been working with the Bureau of Consular Affairs ("CA") and the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations ("OBO") for over a year on enlarging the Consular Section to accommodate growth in staffing, increased numbers of applicants, and new legislatively-mandated visa requirements. The ideal plan for the Mission is to construct a new facility in the third garden of the Mission compound. However, neither CA nor OBO have the necessary funds to cover construction costs, estimated to be approximately USD 11 million, nor will they have those funds in the foreseeable future. Therefore the Embassy has devised an interim plan to enlarge the Consular Section by expanding into adjacent areas of the Chancery currently occupied by other sections and remodeling other areas to accommodate their relocation. While this solution is not ideal, we do not have the luxury of waiting many years for the eventual construction of a new Consular facility.

We have received from CA funds in the amount of \$42,000 for design of the expansion project and are working with a local architectural firm on the plans, which are currently at the 35% completion stage. Embassy will need additional funds from CA and/or OBO to cover the costs of renovation and relocation to implement this proposal. We estimate the costs to be approximately \$350,000 and have requested this amount from the Department.

6. Recommendation No. 5: Embassy Prague should implement a more active monitoring schedule to scan all user folders for inappropriate material and document the review of randomly selected user libraries. (Action: Embassy Prague)

Embassy's response: ISO and ISSO Prague have implemented a bi-weekly random scan of user libraries, email, and folders. These reviews are documented in the ISSO Log.

7. Recommendation No. 6: Embassy Prague should complete and implement the information system documentation requirements and provide copies of the plans to the Bureau of Information Resource Management. (Action: Embassy Prague)

Embassy's response: ISSO and Systems Managers have submitted the IT Contingency Plan and System Security Plan to DS for review. The Configuration Management Plan has an anticipated completion/submission date of 31 January 2004.

18. Recommendation No. 7: Embassy Prague, in coordination with the Bureau of Information Resource Management, should work to approve an offsite alternate facility for classified information systems processing and storage. (Action: Embassy Prague, in coordination with IRM)
Embassy's response: IRM equipment and contingency plans are available, but the lack of an offsite location cleared for the storage and processing reduces their effectiveness. Post IMO is currently working with IRM and DS to resolve this issue. DS regulations regarding offsite storage/processing of classified information severely reduce the options open to post regarding storage of contingency classified equipment/operations.

19. Recommendation No. 8: Embassy Prague should discontinue the practice of authorizing U.S. government sponsored school employees to use the diplomatic pouch for personal mail services. (Action: Embassy Prague)

Embassy's response: Embassy is in the process of formally requesting a waiver from DPM in order to provide this service to the U.S. citizens currently working at the International School in Prague.

10. Recommendation No. 9: Embassy Prague should enforce procedures to alert the Deputy Chief of Mission to delinquencies in the preparation of work requirements statements and/or performance evaluations by respective officers. Such delinquencies should be noted in each respective officer's evaluation report. (Action: Embassy Prague)

Embassy's response: Embassy recognizes the importance of ensuring timely submission of local employee performance appraisals and has developed and implemented a systematic method to correct and prevent the problem from re-occurring. We now track performance appraisal due dates in our employee database. During the first 5 days of every month, our HR clerk downloads a customized report of performance appraisal due dates and sends it out to all raters and reviewers, with a copy to the DCM. The DCM is therefore made aware of any delinquencies and raters and reviewers are reminded monthly of upcoming due dates. We anticipate that this new system will help ensure the timely submission of performance appraisals.

HILLAS